

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-19 AEC-11 SAM-01 SAJ-01 SS-20

NSC-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01

USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 DRC-01 /120 W

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R 091737Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0665

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 16677

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: ARTICLE BY RAYMOND ARON ON STRATEGIC ARMS

REF: PARIS 16626

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ARON'S SECOND ARTICLE IN SERIES ON DETENTE IS DEVOTED TO STRATEGIC ARMS AND SALT. HE ARGUES THAT ASYMMETRIES IN INTERIM AGREEMENT HAVE LED TO CURRENT US-SOVIET IMPASSE AND IS RATHER AMBIGUOUS ON SIGNIFICANCE OF POSSIBLE EVENTUAL SOVIET SUPERIORITY IN ICBM MIRVS. ON ONE HAND HE CITES DANGERS OF SOVIET COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITY, BUT IN THE END HE SEEMS TO REJECT THE IDEA THAT A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT ON OFFENSIVE WEAPONS IS ESSENTIAL, CONCLUDING THAT "IT IS MEN NOT ARMS THAT UNLEASH WARS." END SUMMARY.

2. ARON BEGINS BY STATING THAT THE SECRETARY, AT THE END OF THE MOSCOW SUMMIT, "MADE REMARKS WHICH WOULD HAVE SEEMED STRANGE AT ANOTHER TIME. HE PLACED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TEMPORARY FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS ON LIMITING STRATEGIC ARMAMENTS ON THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS AND THEIR 'LACK OF RESTRAINT (DEMESURE)'. HE CONFIRMED AT THE SAME TIME THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE PENTAGON, AS REPORTED IN THE AMERICAN PRESS. PERHAPS PRESIDENT NIXON DID NOT SUPPORT UNRESERVEDLY THE

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THESES OF MR. HENRY KISSINGER."

3. ARON GOES ON TO EXPLAIN "IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE" WHY THE INTERIM AGREEMENT "CONTAINED THE GERM OF THE PRESENT DISAGREEMENT." HE CLAIMS THAT NEITHER THE AMERICANS NOR THE SOVIETS ACCEPT THE THEORY THAT SUPERIORITY OR INFERIORITY DOESN'T MATTER AFTER A CERTAIN DESTRUCTIVE CAPACITY HAS BEEN ATTAINED. THEORIES OF OVERKILL RUN UP AGAINST WEAPONS RESEARCHERS AND MILITARY CHIEFS AND THIS, ACCORDING TO ARON, IS A FACT. MOREOVER, EVEN IF BOTH SIDES REJECT NUCLEAR WAR, THE INFLUENCE ON DIPLOMACY OF THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS MUST STILL BE DETERMINED.

4. ARON CONTINUES BY STATING IT IS FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE NUCLEAR STRATEGIC FORCES BECAUSE OF THEIR HETEROGENEITY ON EACH SIDE. HE REVIEWS THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY THE INTERIM AGREEMENT, CONCLUDING THAT THE U.S. ACCEPTED NUMERICAL INFERIORITY OF LAUNCHERS BECAUSE IT HAD SUPERIORITY IN WARHEADS. HOWEVER, HE ADDS THAT LARGER SOVIET MISSILES, WHEN COMBINED WITH MIRV TECHNOLOGY, ACCORDING TO PENTAGON EXPERTS, CAN MAKE THE SOVIETS CAPABLE OF A CERTAIN SUPERIORITY BETWEEN NOW AND 1980 OR 1985.

5. ARON THEN ASKS WHETHER THIS SUPERIORITY WILL BE SIGNIFICANT. HIS REPLY IS THAT "IT IS NEVER POSSIBLE TO SHOW THAT A SUPERIORITY WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANT IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE." CLAIMING THAT SS-18'S OR SS-19'S WILL CARRY 50 MEGATONS OF MIRVED WARHEADS, HE CITES A SCENARIO ACCORDING TO WHICH SOVIET MISSILES ARE LAUNCHED AGAINST

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U.S. ICBM'S, TO SHOW THE DANGER FOR THE U.S. OF "AN INFERIORITY OF A CERTAIN KIND." HE ADDS THAT ACCORDING TO THE U.S. PRESS, THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE IMAGINES SUCH A SCENARIO. THEREFORE, THE U.S. MUST "HAVE THE CAPACITY TO COUNTERATTACK OPPOSING NUCLEAR FORCES AND NOT ONLY CITIES."

6. ARON RETURNS TO THE PROBLEM OF FINDING A COMMON UNIT OF MEASURE FOR U.S. AND SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES, AGAIN NOTING THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE AN ADVANTAGE IN ICBM MEGATONNAGE AND NUMBERS OF LAUNCHERS, WHILE THE U.S. IS SUPERIOR IN WARHEADS AND ACCURACY, TO WHICH HE ADDS, IN PARENTHESES "PROBABLY DECISIVE." TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE IMPORTANCE IS OF THESE FACTORS, HOWEVER, HE SAYS ONLY THAT IT DEPENDS ON THE SCENARIO CONSIDERED.

7. TOUCHING ON THE TTB, ARON CLAIMS THAT THE 150 KILO-TON THRESHOLD TO TAKE EFFECT IN 1976 ONLY SERVES TO CAMOUFLAGED THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A REAL ACCORD, WHICH WOULD END THE QUALITATIVE ARMAMENTS RACE."

8. ARON CONCLUDES THAT THE SECRETARY IS ATTEMPTING TO BUILD A STRUCTURE OF PEACE DESPITE DIFFERENCES OF INTEREST AND IDEOLOGY BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET
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UNION, AND TO THIS END, "HE SEEKS A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT WHICH WILL LIMIT STRATEGIC ARMS AND FORMALIZE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT POWERS. TO MOBILIZE OPINION, HE DENOUNCES THE DANGERS OF AN 'UNCONTROLLABLE TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOSION.'" HOWEVER, ARON FINDS THIS ARGUMENT ALSO AMBIGUOUS. "THE AGREEMENT OF 1972, THE BALANCE BASED ON THE TECHNOLOGICAL LAG OF THE SOVIET UNION, HAS LED LOGICALLY TO THE PRESENT IMPASSE. ONE MUST NATURALLY REGRET THAT THE RUSSIANS AND AMERICANS HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED IN DEFINING THE TERMS OF A BALANCE WHICH WOULD BE LASTING, IF NOT PERMANENT. HOWEVER, LET US NOT CONFUSE THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE WASTED WITH THE THREAT OF AN APOCALYPSE. IT IS MEN NOT ARMS THAT UNLEASH WARS."
IRWIN

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